

The Role of EIPA in the EU-CONSENT Network of Excellence.

Studying the Impact of Enlargement on the EU Institutions

By **Dr Edward Best, Thomas Christiansen, Pierpaolo Settembri** and **Araceli Barragan***

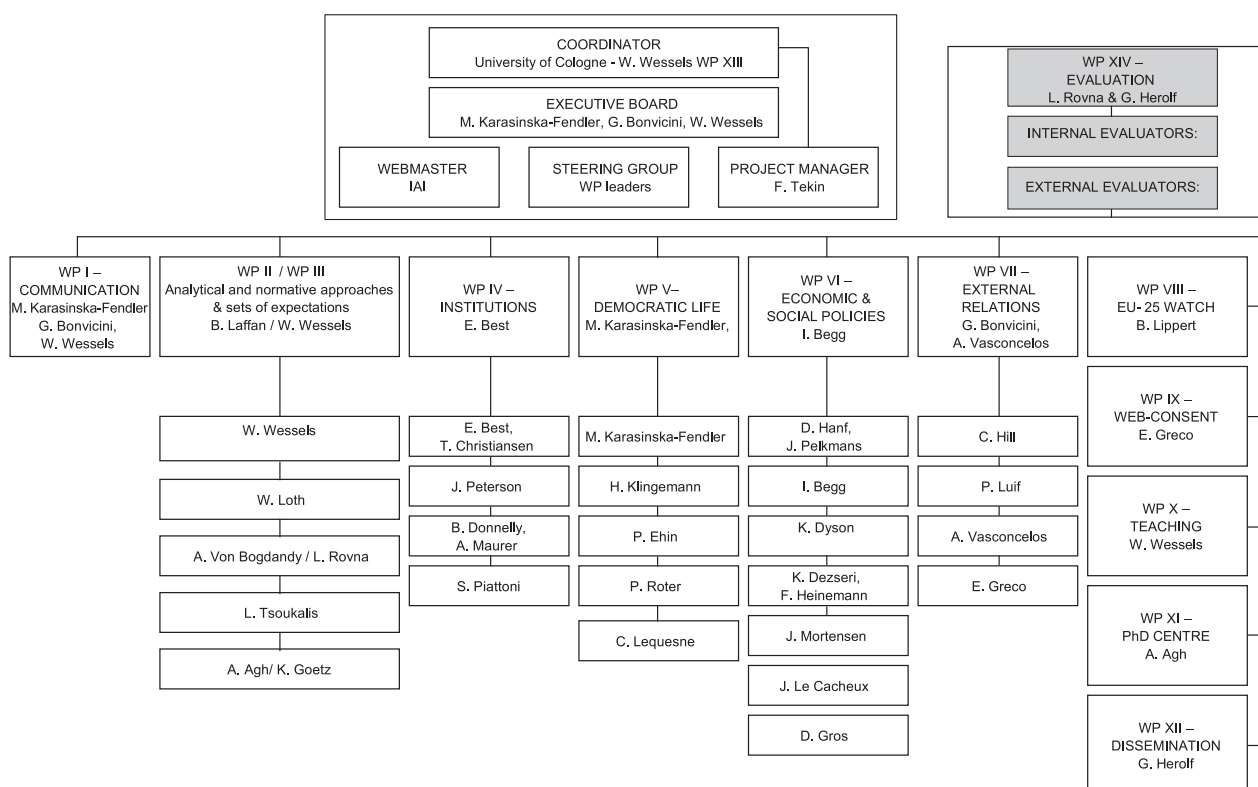
Since 1 June 2005, EIPA has been part of an EU Network of Excellence for joint research and teaching supported by the European Commission's 6th Framework Programme and coordinated by Professor Wolfgang Wessels at the University of Cologne. The project, which has a duration of four years, brings together 48 institutional partners, including 25 universities, from 22 EU Member States and three candidate countries. It focuses on the evolution of the European Union in the context of enlargement, exploring interactions between deepening and widening in the Union's institutions, policies and politics.

The goals of the project are not only to encourage and assist the production of "excellent" research output among the partners by means of 'integrating activities' and shared research activities. They are also to mobilise young researchers (PhD mobility programme and biannual PhD school), and to contribute to public knowledge about EU deepening and enlargement through dissemination activities

(public events and common publications), and a multilingual glossary, bibliographies and core curricula, and virtual study units, all of which will be placed on the website: <http://www.eu-consent.net/>.

The network is divided into 14 Work Packages. Some horizontal dimensions of the Network's mission – communication, dissemination etc. There are four thematic Work Packages, looking at

- **Institutions and Political Actors**, coordinated at EIPA
- **Democracy, Legitimacy and Identities**, coordinated by Maria Karasinska-Fendler (Europa Institute, Lodz)
- **Economic and Social Policies**, coordinated by Ian Begg (London School of Economics)
- **Political and Security Aspects of the EU's External Relations**, coordinated by Gianni Bonvicini (Institute of International Affairs, Rome) and Alvaro de Vasconcelos (Institute for Strategic and International Studies, Lisbon).



EIPA leads the Work Package on “Institutions”, which aims to assess the impact of enlargement on the institutions and political actors of the European Union. It consists of 4 Teams, specialised on thematic areas:

- Team 6 – Leadership:
Edward Best and Thomas Christiansen (EIPA, Maastricht)
 - The Council of Ministers
 - The European Council
 - The European Agencies
 - Institutional Cooperation in Implementation
- Team 7 – Leadership:
John Peterson (University of Edinburgh)
 - The Commission and the European Civil Service
- Team 8 – Leadership:
Brendan Donnelly (The Federal Trust, London)
Andreas Maurer (Stiftung für Wissenschaft und Politik, Berlin)
 - The European Parliament and Political Actors
 - a sub-team is also set up to deal with the Court of Justice
- Team 9 – Leadership:
Simona Piattoni (Università Degli Studi Di Trento)
 - Multilevel Governance and the Role of the Regions
 - Institutionalised Participation of Economic and Social Actors

Over the next two to three years, the Work Package “Institutions” intends to build up a picture of the real institutional impact of expansion of the EU. This is an ambitious undertaking requiring cautious preparation. While each institution and actor needs to be treated in its own terms, a common basic framework for analysis is necessary to ensure consistency across the thematic teams.

The aim is therefore simultaneously to engage in a broader reflection about the dynamics of institutional change in the EU (and the overall evolution of the EU), while also designing detailed empirical research on developments in each of the institutions and institutionalised mechanisms of actor participation.

This research, moreover, must necessarily take into account inter-institutional dynamics, as well as the interaction between various levels of analysis:

- the functioning of each of the European “Institutions” as organisations;
- the operation of networks;
- the generation and application of European rules; and
- the evolution of the European political/institutional system as a whole.

A general analytical framework has thus been drafted during the first months of the project and will be refined in the course of the preliminary phase of the work.¹ On the basis of this common approach, each team is encouraged to identify the pressures for change which can be specifically attributed to enlargement, as compared to other dynamics of institutional change, and to assess whether these are simply assimilated, whether institutional arrangements are adapted, or whether some form of transformation takes place. In this light, the Work Package “Institutions” evaluates whether enlargement brings about more fundamental change in the nature of each institution/ actor and of the institutional system as a whole, and reflects on the implications of these studies for theories of integration and institutional change.

The Work Package on “Institutions” aims to produce a series of working papers and two through two edited volumes on the institutional impact of enlargement, to be delivered at the end of the second and fourth year of the project.

NOTES

- * EU-Consent – EIPA Team:

Dr Edward Best,
Leader of WP “Institutions”
and co-leader of Team 6



Thomas Christiansen,
Co-leader of Team 6



Pierpaolo Settembri,
Responsible for co-ordination
of EU-CONSENT at EIPA



Araceli Barragán,
EU-CONSENT
Programme Organiser



¹ The work is accessible at: http://www.eu-consent.net/library/Team6_AnalyticalFramework.PDF

The following activities took place during the first year of activities.

4 October 2005, Maastricht

Initiative: WP IV

Workshop: Towards a Common Analytical Framework

8-9 February 2006, Edinburgh

Initiative: Team 7

Workshop: The Commission and the European Civil Service

24-25 February 2006, Trento

Initiative: Team 9

Workshop: European Institutions after the 2004 Enlargement: The Committee of the Regions, The Economic and Social Committee and The Social Dialogue

13 March 2006, Brussels

Initiative: Team 6

Workshop: Measuring the Management of Council Business

30 March 2006, London

Initiative: Team 8

Workshop: The Role of the European Parliament in the Development of a European Political Space

4 May 2006, Budapest

Initiative: WP IV

Workshop: Meeting of the team leaders

24 May 2006, Berlin

Initiative: WP IV

Workshop: The Political Development of the Enlarged Union

